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AUTHOR	Orr, David W.
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ABSTRACT

This book includes 23 essays on the environmental crisis that address the failures to educate people to think broadly, to perceive systems and patterns, and to live as whole persons. Current educational reforms are driven by the belief that students must be prepared to effectively compete in a global economy. A more important reason to reform education is the rapid decline in the habitability of the earth. This book proposes that the disordering of ecological systems and the great biogeochemical cycles of the earth reflect a prior disorder in the thought, perception, imagination, intellectual priorities, and loyalties inherent in the industrial mind. Ultimately, then, current ecological crises relate to how individuals think and the institutions (educational) that purport to shape and refine the capacity to think. Education should be promoting the development of ecological design intelligence, the signs of which are healthy, durable, resilient, just, and prosperous communities. Part 1 addresses questions surrounding the purpose of education, the dangers of education, and the business of education. Part 2 suggests that society must rethink initial assumptions about learning and educational goals. As the curriculum has become more extensive, complex, and technologically sophisticated, society has lost the ability to ask questions about the human condition. Essays in this section focus on love, intelligence, wisdom, virtue, responsibility, value, and good sense. Part 3 proposes that standards for educational quality must change to account for how institutions and their graduates affect the biotic world. Chapters in this section address institutional standards, the disciplinary organization of learning, curriculum, professionalism, and implications of college architecture. Part 4 proposes an alternative destiny for education. These essays explore "biophilia," an innate affinity for life; obstacles to living well; and the future balance between rural and urban areas in a world that must come to grips with limits of many kinds. Contains references and an index. (LP)

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